R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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SELECTION OF SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH MATERIALS CONCERNING SUPERIOR STUDENTS AND PROCESSING FOR STORAGE, RETRIEVAL AND DISSEMINATION. FINAL REPORT.

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A PROJECT WAS UNDERTAKEN TO SELECT, ABSTRACT, AND INDEX SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH MATERIALS CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS OF HIGH ABILITY. IN ADDITION TO THE DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE OFFICES OF THE INTER-UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON THE SUPERIOR STUDENT, A REQUEST WAS SENT TO LEADING ADMINISTRATORS ON VARIOUS CAMPUSES FOR RECENT LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT. A TOTAL OF 1,000 DOCUMENTS WERE ANALYZED AND ABSTRACTED AS WELL AS INDEXED ACCORDING TO KEY WORDS IN THE ABSTRACT. THE ABSTRACTS ALONG WITH THE DOCUMENTS FROM WHICH THE ABSTRACTS WERE MADE, WERE SHIPPED TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INFORMATION CENTER. THE DOCUMENTS WILL BE SORTED AND EVALUATED CONCERNING THEIR UTILITY TO POSSIBLE FUTURE READERS. THEY WILL BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY, AND THE ENTIRE SET RETURNED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO. A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WERE ENCOUNTERED DURING THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT. EXAMPLES DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT ARE--FORMS USED FOR ABSTRACTING, INDEXING, SELECTION OF RESEARCH MATERIALS, EDITING, AND LIAISON. (JC)

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FINAL REPORT ON

Cooperative Research Small Contract Project
S-256, Contract No. OE-5-10-256

Period of Report: October 1, 1964 to
July 31, 1965

Contractor: University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado

Title of Project: Selection of Significant Research Materials Concerning Superior Students and Processing for Storage, Retrieval and Dissemination

Project Director: Philip I. Mitterling

I. Major Activities of This Reporting Period

The offices of the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student contain a number of documents pertinent to the education of students of high ability. This collection of manuscripts, journals, documents, letters, files, course descriptions, committee reports and other written material was searched. Items considered sufficiently worthwhile to be included in the Education Research Information Center's collection were selected, abstracted and indexed. In addition, a request was sent to leading administrators on various campuses for

any recent literature they might have in their files pertaining to the honors movement and the higher education of students of superior ability. Unfortunately, material returned in reply to this request proved to be, for the most part, inadequate. Very little, therefore, was included in the collection.

One thousand documents were analyzed and abstracted as well as indexed according to key words contained in the abstraction. The set of abstractions, along with the documents from which the abstractions were derived, were packaged and shipped to the Education Research Information Center. The documents from which the abstractions were derived are to be sorted and evaluated concerning their utility to possible future readers. They are then to be reproduced photographically. After filming, the whole set of documents is to be returned to Mr. John Brennan, Curator, Western Historical Collections, Norlin Library, University of Colorado. This is a modification of earlier decisions which stipulated that the manuscripts were to be microfilmed in Boulder after being evaluated by the staff of the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student.

Recently, three days were spent in consultation with representatives from the Office of Education discussing essential revisions in the abstracting form that is currently being used by the Education Research Information Center as well as procedures respecting future contracts.

II. Special Problems and/or Departures

Numerous problems and departures were encountered during the course of fulfilling this contract. These will be discussed in detail. Each problem will be identified and the procedure used for coping with it will be presented or suggested.

1. Forms to be used for abstracting. Because the Office of Education was unable to develop an appropriate form for abstracting before we had reached the terminal period of our contract, we found ourselves duplicating a considerable amount of typing. The first form which we used was merely to take a document, list the author, title and other pertinent information along with the abstraction, on a plain piece of typing paper. When the first tentative form came through, we typed this information on that form. When this form in turn was modified, we retyped the information on the second form. When this was changed once again

we used the new form but did not retype all of the older abstractions on the new printed form. For this reason, the abstractions appear in two forms. One is the latest printed form and the other is a form which, following an earlier version, is a mimeographed duplication of a form sent to us by the Education Research Information Center. The mimeographed version does not differ significantly from the printed version. (It should also be noted that it was necessary for our office to prepare the mimeographed forms. Only five copies were originally sent by the Office of Education.)

2. Indexing. A part of the contract specified that the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student was to index each of the abstracted documents. The index terms were to be included on the form on which the abstraction appeared. This task was done. However, a thesaurus of terms which was to be used in the indexing process was not, as had been originally intended, sent to us by the Education Research Information Center. Delays in the preparation of the thesaurus prevented this. Our job of indexing is based, then, on what are considered some key terms in the literature that was surveyed.

We believe that the indexing which was done may be of some use in developing a thesaurus of terms for the education of the superior student. For this reason we purposely used synonymous terms and slight variations in terminology. Rigorous indexing would have required a standardized terminology. Lacking this, we view the indexing done here as providing some basis for developing such a terminology.

3. Selection of articles, documents, reports, etc. As indicated in earlier reports on this contract, this proved to be the thorniest of all difficulties encountered in meeting the terms of the contract. Policies for the selection of documents were modified both by the Office of Education and the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student in various ways. Early policy led us to believe that any current and relevant literature should be used. The latest policy of the Education Research Information Center was relayed to us by Mr. Eller on July 7. At that time we were informed that any materials which were already available through libraries, journal collections, or other accessible distributing agencies were not to be abstracted. By this time, of course, our set of

abstractions contained quite a few such items. In any event, the nature of the documents to be included in the abstracting process should be carefully defined. It might even be advisable, where an entire collection is to be gone through, to have a representative of the Education Research Information Center sit in on the selection process.

Early policy was liberal enough to include as permissable the use of existing abstracted documents. Under the terms of this policy it would be appropriate to take abstractions from such documents as the Psychological Abstracts or the Sociological Abstracts so long as the literature cited was recent and relevant to the honors effort. About fifty or so such abstractions are included in this set to bring the collection up to the required 1,000 documents. They were also included because they were useful in the listing of additional key words in the index.

4. The abstract. Abstracting proved to be relatively simple once we got started. Nonetheless, there were several problems. The least of these concerned early instructions to hold abstractions

within a 50 word limit. Later we were informed that abstractions were to be around 250 words in length where feasible.

A second problem concerned abstracting whole works or parts of works. Eventually, in the quest for documents, we resorted to abstracting separate chapters of books and monographs, especially where they were done by separate authors. In some instances this meant that as many as 15 or 20 items might come from a single source. Some duplication of content was the principal consequence.

5. Editing. We now understand that editing will be performed by the Education Research Information Center. For that reason, and because time became increasingly limited, the abstractions have not been edited with attention being paid to the most minute details. Each abstraction has, however, been read several times and gross errors have been corrected.

6. Liaison. This effort was understood to be something of a trial run by both the Office of Education and by members of the staff of the Inter-university Committee on the Superior Student.

We expected various bugs to turn up in the operation. Some of the problems encountered might have been corrected more readily and easily if we had enjoyed closer liaison with the Office of Education. For example, errors in abstracting or in selection policy were allowed to continue until they had reached a point where, to correct them, would require the revision of several hundred abstractions. We found the visit from Mr. Eller and Miss Haberle most worthwhile insofar as it provided us with some kind of framework to go by. They helped us to establish criteria that would assure that the job would ultimately be done well. Unfortunately, they visited us too late in the operation to have much effect.

III. Compliance with Article 8

Our project did not involve the use of any data gathered through questionnaires, structured or unstructured interviews, or scales of any kind.

IV. Staff Summary

Persons paid from federal funds:
Ray P. Cuzzort (partially)
Mary Ann Lefler (partially)

Persons paid from other sources:
Ray P. Cuzzort (partially)
Mary Ann Lefler (partially)
Philip I. Mitterling
Joseph W. Cohen
Walter B. Lovelace

V. Date

This final report was written on July 30, 1965 and forwarded to the Office of Education on July 31, 1965.

VI. Signature of the Project Director

Philip I. Mitterling, Director
Inter-university Committee on
the Superior Student
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado

Boulder, Colorado
July 30, 1965